2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1982
[P. 28b] NU36 Tarasco MU3d
Pátzcuaro

owned a sugar press and a flour mill.[21] When the village's hospital had good property, this financed not only the cult and fiesta expenses but also other duties of the hospital officers, such as caring for the sick and paying for masses of the dead. In addition, the cargueros could use this same source of income to provide food for the villagers at some of the festivals.[22] One village had a cofradía in order to pay the *pindecuario* and another one to pay for the sick and for burials.[23] Some towns had more than one cofradía or *hermandad*[24] besides that of the Conception of the hospital.

In villages with rich property and in which other expenses were met by small contributions from all, cult upkeep was not a financial burden.[25] However, where the cofradías had no property or not enough to meet expenses, upkeep of the cult by heavy personal contributions placed a financial burden on the villagers. In Amatlan, Indian poverty was attributed to heavy services for the priest, in spite of the fact that there were two cofradías with their own property. In Tancítaro the hospital had lost property and the Indians paid from their personal resources, causing the decline of the hospital although it was once very prosperous.[26] In the region north of the Sierra where haciendas were already important and the Indian speech was beginning to recede,[27] the cofradías of the hospital owned no property *(fondos)* from which they could meet their expenses.[28]

The financial obligations of the cargos were specially onerous and sometimes led the carguero to peonage. In *Tangancícuaro* the prioste became "almost a slave, hiring himself out as a muleteer servant [sirviente de recua]",[29] in Guarachita "very impoverished and sometimes almost like a slave in a hacienda".[30] In Jiquilpan, the mayordomos of different saints bound *(cautivan)* themselves for a long time in order to retrieve what they had spent.[31] On the other hand, in Tangamandapio and Taripo, a number of fiestas were no longer held because of the poverty of the people.[32]

---

21. Tacámbaro (Osbourn Ms.).
22. Huetamo, Cutzeo (Osbourn Ms.).
23. Amatlan (Osbourn Ms.).
24. Apatzingán, Tacámbaro, La Guacana, Charanguco (Osbourn Ms.).
25. For instance Huetamo, Cutzeo (Osbourn Ms.).
26. Osbourn Ms.
27. Some towns in this area, like Sahuayo and Guarachita, were of Nahuatl speech but their culture seems to have been similar to that of neighboring Tarascan speaking villages.
28. Rincón, 1844, passim.
29. Ibid., 478.
30. Ibid., 486.
31. Osbourn Ms.
32. Rincón, 1844, 477, 478.

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
[P 299] NU34 Tarasco NU34
Pátzcuaro

175
735
794 The effect of excessive cult expenses on Indian poverty was strong enough to lead the subdelegate (Spanish district authority) to give instructions against it. He recommended avoiding those banquets and superfluities based on the pretext of church festivals. In the case of Amatlan, he directed that no personal service should be given the priest other than that of sexton and bellman.[33]

624 The civil administration conformed to general practice in colonial Mexico. Every Indian town was headed by a *gobernador*. There were also one or more *alcaldes* (mayors) and a number of *regidores* (councilmen), according to the size of the town. Minor officials seem to have been more variable: *alguaciles*, similar officers called *katápi* in Tarascan, errand boys *(topil)*, and a scribe.

624 An important characteristic of this civil organization was its close connection with
794 the cult organization. For as long as the union of State and Church lasted (until the middle of the nineteenth century), the obligations of the village toward the priest and the cult had the sanction of the civil authorities who approved the church fees *(aranceles)*. The higher civil authorities also intervened in the regulation of cult activities.[34] The village civil officers had also some religious obligations in sponsoring certain festivals or in contributing to the support of the priest.[35]

The custom of making a religious office prerequisite for a civil one or for attaining the status of elder (Spanish, *principal;* Tarascan, *t'aɪépiti*) seems also to have been present. Evidence for the eighteenth century is lacking. Only for the village of Cutzeo we know that the principales were those who had passed through the office of governor, and that *atole* (cornmeal) for their Saturday meetings was made by the semaneros in the hospital. Today, however, traits of the surviving religious organization suggest the former existence of this connection between civil and religious officers. The group of elders is called *cabildo*, which originally meant 'town council', although it can also mean sodality council. In Cherán, principales are those who have passed through the offices of prioste and colector. In Angahuan also, religious offices have to be held before one becomes alcalde or member of the cabildo.[36]

---

33. Osbourn Ms.
34. Osbourn Ms.; Estado, 1944, *passim*.
35. The governor in Arío, Tacámbaro (Osbourn Ms.), Coeneo (Rivera, 1868, 332, 334), San Francisco (Ocampo, 1900, 287); the councilmen in Tancítaro (Osbourn Ms.).
36. Beals, 1946, 132, 143.

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
[P. 296] NU34 Tarasco NU34
Pátzcuaro

624 More detailed information comes from
794 Chilchota. Here a man was first mayordomo of the hospital, then mayordomo of the patron saint, later mayordomo of his barrio's saint, and then *vaquero* (another religious office) in order to become councilman *(regidor)*. Thereafter he was one of the elders.[37] Data from Pichátaro also seem to indicate religious office as prerequisite for eldership, but the facts are not clear.[38]

To judge from modern survivals, nomination of the new officers was made by the acting officers together with the elders. It was customary to ask for a cargo because of a religious vow or the desire to advance in the social scale. The elders could in addition ask any man to join in their duties.[39] Petitioning for office seems to have been accompanied by taking presents to the elders or councilmen, in typical Indian fashion.

Decline of the Traditional Organization: Anticlericalism and Catholic Reaction

175 At the end of the eighteenth century,
794 then, the heavy cult expenses were caus-
735 ing the impoverishment of the Indians in those villages, which, through work in the haciendas, were more related to the national economy and which had no communal property, or not enough, devoted to the upkeep of the cult. In their turn the impoverished villages had to reduce the number of festivals because they were unable to meet expenses, and the authorities tried to suppress excessive expenses in some festivals and personal services to the priests.

175 For the nineteenth century there is no
794 survey of the Tarascan area comparable to that for the end of the eighteenth. Only for the turn of the century is information again available. Since this is the period of
423 further growth of the haciendas and loss of village communal property — factors which already were causing instability in the cult organization and the end of the colonial period — we can safely assume that the same trend continued during the nineteenth century. Looking into the modern situation we see that the communal property devoted to support of the cult is practically nonexistant. Only some cattle are still devoted to Saint Ines in Cherán. In Chilchota, keeping cattle for the Virgin is still remembered[40] and pro-

37. *Ibid.*, 215.
38. León, 1906, 437.
39. Beals, 1946, 123 (for Cherán); 218 (for Chilchota).
40. *Ibid.*, 216, 139.

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
[P.309] NU34 Tarasco NU34
Pátzcuaro

duce from the tule grounds in Jarácuaro was used until a short time ago to buy wax for the church.

Financing the cult is now effected almost exclusively by individual contributions from cargueros or the townspeople at large. Indian impoverishment caused by attending to religious festivals is reported again by Lumholtz for Cherán at the turn of the century.[41] Since villagers were able, because of the individualization of land-ownership, to sell or pawn their lands to outsiders, the possibility of the cult expenses' hastening the loss of Indian properties undoubtedly increased. This is alive in the memory of many people today, for example in La Cañada, Urapicho, Uricho, and Arocutin.

The period of Mexican Independence up to the present time has produced a number of changes in the organization of local government. These changes cannot be followed in detail, for no study is available on local government in Mexico.

Today, the office of governor has disappeared without leaving any trace in modern organization. *Regidores* is today another name for the *munícipes* (councilmen)[42] but no data are available as to whether they are a continuation from the colonial officers. Alcaldes were in existence at least until the end of the nineteenth century.[43] During the Porfirio Díaz period, government policy gave almost all direct control to the head (*jefe político*) of each district. After the Revolution a turn was taken toward the free township (*municipio libre*), and local governments secured more autonomy. Every municipio in Michoacan is now governed by elected councilmen, one of whom acts as municipal president and another as an executive (*síndico*). A judge and his alternate are also elected. There are in addition an appointed secretary, a treasurer, and policemen.

As each municipio includes a number of villages, the above officers are found only in the head town of each, although they may come from one of the dependent villages. Most villages being dependent (*tenencias*) have only a chief (*jefe*) with his alternate and a judge. Any survival from the old organization is not part of the official government but only of the folk organization of the cult.

The names of some of the religious of-

41. Lumholtz, 1902, 2:398.
42. Beals, 1946, 105; Foster, 1948, 178.
43. Constituciones, 1902, 494, 414-415; Lumholtz, 1902, 2:391.

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
[EP. 316] NU34 Tarasco NU34
Pátzcuaro

794 by commissioners (*comisionado, encargado*) named by the priest or the town council for a given task. In this case the time required is less and also the contributions, the expenses being met by the town or ward (barrio) and the commissioner acting as collector.

794 Changes in recent years have been, on the one hand, the rise of an anticlerical
668 movement among the agraristas, aiming at suppressing the cult. On the other hand,
798 in the conservative communities trying to preserve the cult, changes can be described in terms of the decline of the cabildo, increased intervention by the priest or town council, and the change from individual sponsor to commissioner.

* * *

The accumulation of causes giving rise to a movement against the organization of the cult and the cargos had thus been going on for a long period of time when the Mexican agrarian revolution began to be influential in Michoacan. The local participation of Tarascan villages in the movements for agrarian reform has been outlined in the previous chapter. The local agraristas became supporters of the national revolutionary governments from which they expected to receive lands. Both the national and the local situations also combined to produce an anticlerical policy on the part of the agraristas.

Social studies in Michoacan have been limited to peasant communities, and no good study is available on the haciendas and the cities. Consequently there is no good information as to the way in which the anticlerical policy of the government was evident in Michoacan. In Mexico at large the official Church has been connected with the traditional landowner class, which explains the anticlerical policies of the government. In Michoacan we can assume the same situation prevailed, for we know that the church here, too, opposed the government's agrarian reforms.[81] Anticlericalism appears on the one hand as the influence of governmental policies. On the other hand, the local situation is of paramount importance and only in those places where local conditions provided a basis for it has anticlericalism gained any stronghold.

● [735] Financing the traditional cult had been the cause in many villages for Indian impoverishment and the loss of land to a few rich or to outsiders. This fact led the

81. Foster, 1948, 175.

773
775 Grownups, people say some of them go to heaven, but who knows; it is necessary to go
[539] through punishment first."

In their journeys to their abode, the dead are brought before God and/or the saints for a sort of judgment which decides their destiny. A few beliefs relate to this judgment before God, and emphasize 'good' behavior toward the fireplace and towards dogs. One should not spit or kick the firestones, because at the hour of death they will go to God and complain about this bad treatment. One reason given
[778] is that the hearthstones represent the Holy Cross. Similarly, one should not throw hot water to the ground. The earth will complain to God and say, "This one
[825] burned me." A black dog will also complain if badly treated. On the other hand,
[735] if one gives alms to beggars, they will speak favorably to God.

Other beliefs concern activities which, if not properly followed on earth, must be carried out after death before eternal rest is granted. Thus the hospital cargueros who do not properly participate in the week-end processions in the churchyard have to do so after death. Penitents who do not carry the heavy cross as they promised similarly have to do this after death. When a child has been baptized,
[788] to become *compadres* the parents and godparents must go to the church and perform a ritualized salutation. One does not really become compadre until this has been performed. If one does not make this salutation with one's children's godparents, the soul will have to travel and meet the souls of the compadres-to-be, wherever they are, in order to perform it. Only then will the soul be free to go to its destination. Similarly, taking ashes from the hearth and treating the children well, feeding, washing, and dressing them properly, are sanctioned by the belief that the woman who does not do so on earth will be busy after death making up for her faulty behavior.

The beliefs about the dead and the proper behavior to reach heaven are confirmed in the experiences of people who die but come back to life, because it is found out that their time was not yet come. Thus, as to the destiny of the dead, some revived people report having seen the place in hell reserved for the agraristas working the land in Copujo (land belonging to Jarácuaro). Another report mentions having seen in hell people who were

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
[P. 576] NU34 Tarasco NU34
Pátzcuaro

CONCLUSIONS

794 religious expenses or by contributions from all the villagers as a group or from an individual sponsor.

771 Religious ideology in this period must have had a considerable number of ideas related to the unorganized religion, probably non-ethical and based on the personification of Nature. The Catholic ideology dominated, however. Ethical in character, it sanctioned such folk culture values as the family, small property, the Indian way of life and proper observance of the folk cult. But it also sanctioned national institutions: support of the priest and the Church and the national order which the Church in its turn supports.

621 These communities began to decline in the face of other growing segments of the
178 society (primarily the haciendas), and tendencies disrupting the folk culture became evident within the communities. Forces for change were active from early colonial times in advanced areas but at a much later date in backward areas such as parts of the Tarascan region. They became strongest with the capitalist development of Mexico at the end of the nineteenth century.

423 The loss of Indian lands to haciendas
182 diminished the importance of the Indian communities within the country. Within the Indian communities the economic im-
178 pact of this development caused the abolition of communal property and the more complete individualization of landownership, the decline of crafts, more work on outside farms, increased dependency on the market, and wealth differences among the villagers.

771 After the separation of Church and State, the old system of organizing the religious cult no longer had State sanction. With new systems of local government the religious officers became less connect-
[794] ed with the civil. Cult financing came to be done almost exclusively through personal contributions by sponsors, and, given the
● [735] changing economic order, it constituted a burden which often led to impoverishment and the loss of land.

182 The factors disrupting the folk culture
178 are evident in the folk ideology as it condemns money and wealth. With increased dependence on the outside world came

3:Beals, Carrasco & McCorkle E-5 (1940-1942) 1944
NU34 Tarasco NU34
Sierra Tarascans

592 and the number of persons in the household. A
362 sampling technique was used, and about 5 percent
125 of the houses in each *barrio*, or *cuartel*, were measured and a census of their inhabitants taken. The only subjective factor in the study was the selection of houses for measurement. An effort was made to select houses in different classifications more or less in the proportions in which they seemed to occur in the *cuartel*. As this study was done only after several months of familiarity with the town, it is believed the subjective error is not large. Comparative data are given from the town of Sevina. In the latter town, two streets were selected, and data taken from every house on each of the two streets from the central plaza to the edge of town.

592 It is evident that in an appreciable number of
362 cases more than one family occupies a lot. This
[735] situation may be due to several causes. In some
[591] instances, it is a reflection of extreme poverty. In others, it results from sons remaining with their parents after marriage. In some instances also sons or sons and daughters may jointly occupy a lot inherited from their parents without subdividing the property.

362 In those cases where no house existed, 15 out
[735] of 52, poverty is indicated. It is true, however, that cases may exist where the person may be relatively comfortable financially and has not built a house because he has no agricultural land and hence no great need for storage space. In most cases where more than 1 family occupied a lot, there is a separate kitchen for each family. In the 22 cases in which more than 1 family occu-